

Operational Encirclements: Can the U.S. Military Decisively Follow Through?

**A Monograph
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Abstract

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This study is a historical analysis of how encirclement operations have been and still are important offensive operations. These operations need to be given priority in planning and execution by the United States Military. Encirclement operations have proven to be decisive military operations throughout history; regardless of the composition and disposition of the enemy encircled. The U.S. military has maintained the decisive edge on the battlefield for over sixty years. Even with the benefits of technology, air supremacy, firepower, mobility, and maneuver, the U.S. military has not yet been completely successful in planning and executing encirclement operations. Today the U.S. military is arguably the best equipped and trained force in history. Even with this professional force, it is questionable whether the U.S. military could successfully execute an encirclement operation. Therefore this monograph provides a historical examination as to why the U.S. military has been unable to reap the benefits of the offensive maneuver of encirclement.

To accomplish this examination, this monograph conducts an analysis of four historical case studies: The Argentan-Falaise Pocket, the Battle of Ia Drang, Doctrinal Revolution from 1986-2001, and Operation Anaconda. The analysis identifies the U.S. military has placed an over reliance on firepower to replace the maneuver of ground combat units. Secondly, this monograph also argues the U.S. military has placed too much emphasis on technology. This belief in technology has reduced the number of ground combat units employed in offensive operations. Additionally, U.S. military doctrine historically has not provided the foundation necessary to support and encourage the planning and execution of encirclement operations. These deficiencies together have prevented the U.S. military from capitalizing on the decisive nature resulting from the speed and shock of correctly executed encirclement operations.

This paper concludes the Army must acknowledge and amend its doctrine to reflect the encirclement operation as a stand-alone form of offensive maneuver. Furthermore, encirclement operations are not just a result of a pursuit or exploitation operation. Encirclement operations can and should be planned as an independent operation. Prioritizing these operations by making them an independent mission will ensure U.S. forces have the resources and combat power needed to ensure success on the battlefield.

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Introduction

“When the enemy is driven back, we have failed, and when he is cut off, encircled and dispersed, we have succeeded.”¹

Field Marshal Prince Aleksander V. Suvorov

The ultimate objective of successfully maneuvering to achieve an operational encirclement around one's enemy has been an integral part of warfare since the Carthaginian commander Hannibal Barca encircled and destroyed a Roman army numbering over 80,000 soldiers in the Battle of Cannae in 216 B.C.² The Battle of Cannae along with numerous other battles throughout history provide ample record attesting to the decisive effect achieved by armies that skillfully maneuvered and successfully encircled their enemy. During World War II, outmaneuvering the enemy to accomplish a successful operational encirclement became one of the trademark characteristics defining success or failure for both the major allied and axis powers. The Soviet military during the course of World War II conducted numerous operational encirclements destroying over 200 division sized formations.³ Historical battles provide a stout testament to the decisive effect encirclement operations have had on the outcome of military operations.

Achieving these bold operations has always heavily depended on the encircling force's ability to quickly mass combat forces and maneuver into a position of advantage preventing the safe withdrawal of the opposing force. Once accomplished, this feat more than any other military action can be the physical and psychological lynchpin needed to demoralize the enemy to the point of utter incapacitation. Even the insurgents opposing the U.S. military today are still just as

¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 04 July 2001), D-1.

² Bevin Alexander, *How Wars Are Won* (New York: Crown Publisher, 2002), 272-273.

³ LTC Lester W. Grau, *Fighting Within an Encirclement: A Comparison of National Concepts*, (Fort Leavenworth: Soviet Army Studies Office, 1991), 1.

vulnerable to suffering from these same ill-effects once encircled. Any fighting force that becomes completely encircled and cut-off from their lines of operation, communication, and ability to withdraw will be severely challenged to maintain their capability and will to fight.

Following the attacks on 9/11, the President of the United States declared a Global War on Terror (GWOT). This declaration had a significant impact on the military of the United States of America. This new war signaled for the military, the need to make the cognitive shift from fighting a Cold War era conventional military codified by established doctrinal patterns. These patterns enabled the U.S. military to identify and target its adversaries enabling the concentration of friendly combat power. No longer was the enemy bounded by political establishments. The enemy had no respective geographical boundaries to protect and therefore could fight decentralized. The stage was now set for the current and estimated future commitments in regard to the role of the United States military within the strategic, operational, and tactical arenas.⁴

Prior to the declaration of the Global War On Terror, the U.S. military's professionalism and technological superiority on the modern battlefield had established it as the most lethal and

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3.0, Joint Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 17 September 2006, Change 1 13 February 2008), V-1. There are doctrinally three levels of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. These levels help clarify the links between national strategic objectives and tactical actions. Although it is not a joint doctrinal level, the theater strategic level is widely accepted to describe the level between strategic and operational. II-1 In fact, in Joint Pub 3.0, this is a diagram with four levels of war on it, one of which is theater strategic (IV-32).

Strategic level of war. "The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) strategic security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to achieve these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve those objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans." (GL-29).

Operational level of war. "The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas." (GL-25).

Tactical level of war. "The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives." (GL-31).

destructive fighting force to emerge from the Cold War following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This claim was firmly established when the United States military, along with its coalition partners, forcefully expelled Iraqi forces and liberated Kuwait during in the early 1990's. The world watched the tempo and speed with which the U.S. military easily swept aside the once respected and feared Iraqi army. It was during this war when it became visually apparent to the world, that no conventional military force could directly challenge the United States military toe to toe and hope to win.

When the U. S. military targeted its first adversary in retaliation for the September 11th terrorist attacks, this technological supremacy in weapons and communications was further enhanced. It was only a limited number of special operations teams along with the assistance of the U.S. Air Force that provided the decisive element needed to ensure a Northern Alliance victory in overthrowing the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001. This victory was followed by the equally impressive ground war during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Unfortunately both of these military operations were soon overshadowed by emergence of one of the oldest forms of warfare known to man. As Bard E. O'Neill states:

“Insurgency, of course, is hardly a new phenomenon, as Roman armies could have reported from Gaul, Judea, or elsewhere. Indeed, insurgency has probably been the most prevalent type of armed conflict since the creation of organized political communities.”⁵

Both Iraq and Afghanistan erupted into full blown insurgencies in the wake of decisive military victories achieved by conventional forces against more or less conventional forces. These circumstances have since resulted in a dramatic cognitive upheaval, causing dramatic debates on predicting the U. S. military's role and focus in future war-fighting around the globe.

One of these debates has put forth the argument centered on the current operational environment. It contends the U.S. military will be, for the foreseeable future, engaged in

⁵ Bard E. O'Neil, *From Revolution to Apocalypse Insurgency & Terrorism* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), 1.

primarily combating insurgencies, along with conducting stability operations. A quote from Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* captures the reasoning behind this argument,

“The United States possesses overwhelming conventional military superiority. This capability has pushed its enemies to fight U.S. forces unconventionally, mixing modern technology with ancient techniques of insurgency and terrorism.”⁶

Another debate, has focused on the use of technology as a means to act as a partial replacement for military ground forces. This debate centers on the use of advanced unmanned battlefield sensors and other technologies that can be used to identify and attack enemy targets with precision munitions. The employment of this type of advanced hardware it is argued, could effectively replace the need to mass large numbers of combat troops to win on the battlefield.⁷

These debates have developed because of the possible impact they could have in the future conduct of how the U.S. military trains and fights. The implications lie in a belief that technology with firepower can provide an adequate substitute for actual ground combat forces on the battlefield, and also that future warfare will encompass only low intensity conflicts. These claims are dangerous because they discount the continued relevance and importance of offensive maneuver in future warfare even for medium and low intensity conflicts. This is not to mention the enemies facing the U.S. military now; have already and will continue to adapt their tactics and techniques to provide counter-measures to our technology; even employing low-tech means.

The relevance of operational offensive maneuvers, specifically encirclement operations, still retain a vital role in shaping how the United States military prepares and conducts full-spectrum operations, even while currently engaged in two resource intensive low intensity

⁶ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.24, Counterinsurgency*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 December 2006), ix.

⁷ Noah Shachtman, “How technology Almost Lost the War: in Iraq, The Critical Nodes are Social- Not Electronic,” *Wired Magazine* 15 no. 12 (November 2007) http://www.wired.com/politics/security/magazine/15-12/ff_futurewar?currentPage=all (accessed January 10 2009).

conflicts. Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics* defines encirclement operations as, “Operations where one loses its freedom of maneuver because an opposing force is able to isolate it by controlling all ground lines of communication and reinforcement.”⁸ In order to achieve the decisive effect of encirclement operations, commanders and their staffs need to be adequately trained and mentally cognizant of two critical necessities. The first one pertains to an appreciation of the large number of ground combat units required. This also corresponds to the principle of war labeled Mass.⁹ This understanding feeds into the next one, which is the importance of properly balancing the movement of ground forces with the employment of firepower to achieve the critical element of maneuver in encirclement operations. The best definition on the essence of maneuver found is, “Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires, to achieve a position of advantage with respect to the enemy in order to accomplish the mission.”¹⁰ Both of these definitions provide a basis for understanding encirclement operations; but the doctrinal definition of an encirclement operation leaves the user misguided in the application and utility of employing the technique of encirclement during offensive operations.

First, U.S. military doctrine needs to be explicit in addressing how an enemy force should be isolated. It should be clear that encirclement operations require that a large number of forces are needed to mass against the enemy. The belief that firepower and technological advantages can replace the need for a large number of ground combat units is spurious and should be addressed. This adjustment would also require the emphasis on the actual maneuver of forces in achieving a

⁸ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, D-0.

⁹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.0, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 27 February 2008), A-2. The manual defines the principle of war Mass, “Concentrate the effects of combat power at the decisive place and time. The definition also acknowledges that combat power concentrated to achieve results in a specific area, rather than dispersing capabilities across a wide areas and accomplishing less. It also points out that commanders cannot accomplish their mission with massed fires alone. (A-2).

¹⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3.0, Joint Operation*, GL-19.

positional advantage over the enemy, instead of massing heavy concentrations of firepower to destroy the enemy. Most importantly, the encirclement operation needs to be identified as a distinct stand-alone form of offense maneuver; instead of being considered only as an operation that follows the success of an envelopment or penetration.

This doctrinal realignment would serve two purposes. The first facilitates a change in operational thinking; expanding it beyond the cognitive limitations imposed by the current mentality of bounding operations by the framework linked to finding, fixing, and destroying the enemy. The second purpose enables a cultural shift needed to bring about the overwhelming consensus within the military to elevate the encirclement operation to a legitimately recognized independent form of offensive maneuver. Correcting these issues would significantly improve the U.S. military's ability to decidedly follow through when presented with the golden opportunity of encircling and isolating an enemy force. To illustrate these points, four case studies will be discussed and analyzed using the appropriate doctrine of the timeframe. The four case studies are: The Argentan-Falaise Pocket, the Battle of Ia Drang, Doctrinal Revolution from 1986-2001, and Operation Anaconda.

The first two historical case studies selected were: The Battle of Argentan-Falaise Pocket from World War II, followed by the Battle of Ia Drang Valley from the Vietnam War. The examination of each of these operations will incorporate the doctrinal principles that guided U.S. military operations during the specific time period of each of individual case study. The incorporation of these principles will provide the criteria needed to address why the U.S. military could not fully translate their operational and tactical advantages in firepower, mobility, and combat power, into the synergistic effect required to maximize maneuver over the enemy. The areas of interest will discuss how the applicable doctrine of each case study either lacked the detail to provide the needed guidance; or when adequate was violated by commanders. Additionally, in each case study, U.S. forces relied too heavily on firepower to facilitate the maneuver forces. This, along with command and control issues, significantly impacted the U.S.

military's ability to maximize and recognize the potential for decisive maneuver. These battles were unique because in each one; U.S. forces possessed technological advancements that could not fully be capitalized.

Interestingly, both of these battles contained conditions strongly favoring an operational encirclement. Unfortunately, only the Battle of Argentan-Falaise Pocket matured into an actual attempt to encircle enemy forces. Even then, the encirclement came a little too late to prevent the successful withdrawal of a portion of the enemy force. In turn, the Battle of Ia Drang Valley consisted of numerous vertical envelopments that were not simultaneously conducted with horizontal envelopments needed to completely isolate the enemy. U.S. forces succeeded in killing a majority of the enemy, but never achieved the decisive objective of preventing the enemy's withdrawal.

The third case study will discuss and examine the development of U.S. military doctrine from 1986-2001. The examination of this period of doctrine is important because it traces the re-birth of a doctrinal focus on offensive maneuver. This is also the time period where the operational level of war is introduced. The points addressed will focus on the relationship between offensive maneuver, firepower, and technology. The examination will contend that the U.S. military's view on maneuver operations evolved to some extent, but did not achieve the balanced focus between movement of forces and the employment of fires to gain a position of advantage over the enemy. Although, during this time the encirclement operation was explained to a certain degree, U.S. military doctrine did not emphasize in any detail how to execute it until the introduction of the Army Field Manual 3-90 *Tactics* in July 2001. Even this manual does not go far enough explaining in-depth the troop strength and resources required. This manual also reinforces the belief that encirclement operations are not a separate form of offensive operation,

and are normally just an extension of exploitation and pursuit operations.¹¹ This way of thinking ensures that the troop strength and resources will not be available to exploit the potential of encirclement operations. The examination and analysis of the evolution of doctrine during this period will provide the criteria to address the final case study in this monograph.

The fourth case study addressed will be Operation Anaconda, which occurred during the early stages of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in early 2002. The main issue addressed is why the U.S., along with coalition forces, could not effectively isolate and completely encircle their adversary. Although, U.S. and coalition forces were successful in killing and capturing a large portion of the enemy; similar to the past case studies, enemy forces managed to safely withdraw during Operation Anaconda. The study of this operation will highlight a few issues that still reside in U.S. military doctrine. First is the lack of doctrinal guidance devoted to encirclement operations. This lack of guidance affected Operation Anaconda because of the belief that technology and increased firepower could replace the mass of combat forces needed to effectively encircle an enemy force. Second how ground forces are employed in the offense. Because of a lack of doctrinal focus on encirclement operations, the employment role of various ground forces was inappropriate. The Afghan forces used should have only been employed in secondary roles. Finally, command and control issues will also be addressed. The command and control issues discussed will be a lack of planning and coordination between the air and ground components. Additionally, the lack of unity of command will also be addressed to illustrate why Operation Anaconda was an unsuccessful encirclement operation. Operation Anaconda provides the basis for the argument that encirclement operations are still relevant in today's operational environment.

¹¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, D-0.

The Argentan-Falaise Pocket

“To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory, is the secret of successful war.”¹²

Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, 1863

After the success of Operation COBRA in July 1944, American and Allied forces lost an opportunity to surround and isolate the German 5th Panzer Army and 7th Army in the vicinity of the cities of Argentan and Falaise (Appendix 1). Although, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the strategic implications, it is worth noting the magnitude of the failure to successfully annihilate these two German forces. There is a proposed theory that the failure to seal the encirclement ring around these two German Armies in an expedient manner prevented ending the war in a matter of weeks.¹³ The opportunity presented to execute an encirclement of this magnitude was not seized upon because of the lack of guidance in American military doctrine. Compounding this was a series of command and control issues that among other things included the failure of American military commanders, along with their allied counterparts, to build a cohesive plan to ensure their objectives were linked and synchronized to overwhelm and defeat the enemy. Instead, these issues combined added to the fog and friction of war.

Prior to the Battle of Argentan-Falaise Pocket in August 1944, Operation COBRA was planned and developed in July 1944, following the successful execution of the Normandy landings in France by American and Allied military forces in June 1944. The objective of operation COBRA was to achieve a breakthrough of German lines. Once this breakthrough was accomplished, it would facilitate the maneuver of the First and Third Armies by moving these

¹² Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, 3-0.

¹³ Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2004), 403.

forces beyond the highly restrictive terrain around Normandy.¹⁴ The problem with COBRA rested in the lack of forethought in identifying follow-on objectives focused on the destruction of the German Army. Interestingly, the Allies had significant capabilities strongly favoring an operational encirclement of enemy forces. These capabilities were: access to German radio communications, air superiority and mobility.

The access to German radio communications was born from the British code-breaking success code-named ULTRA. In fact, by 1944 almost all German radio traffic was decrypted through the Enigma machine.¹⁵ This intelligence breakthrough provided vital information to the Allied command even though in some cases information gained could not be acted upon in order to ensure the Germans did not learn of their security breach. Even with some of the limitations vital intelligence was still gained and could have been used to obtain a thorough understanding of German plans. Acted upon correctly, this knowledge should have provided the enemy picture needed to successfully plan and execute an operational encirclement. Additionally, the Allied forces had almost complete air supremacy over the Germans. This advantage ensured that the allies had the freedom to conduct any type of movement and maneuver operation.¹⁶ Besides maintaining the advantage in the air, U.S. forces were also vastly more mobile than the Germans.

These advantages should have prompted allied planners to envision that a successful penetration of the German lines in the north by the British and Canadians, and one in the south by the U.S., would inherently lead to the possibility of a large scale operational encirclement to trap a large percentage of German forces. “If those rapidly moving forces should at some point turn north to become a hammer smashing the enemy in their path against the anvil of Montgomery’s

¹⁴ Carlo D’Este, *Decision in Normandy*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 351.

¹⁵ Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe, The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 169.

¹⁶ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 403.

British Second and Canadian First Armies in the eastern sector of Normandy.”¹⁷ The failure to grasp this possibility lay in the absence of guidance found in U.S. military doctrine.

The capstone manual for the U.S. military during this time was entitled, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*.¹⁸ The version of this manual was published in 1944, and clearly focused at the tactical level of war. The manual identified only two types of offensive maneuvers; either envelopment or penetration. There was also a limited discussion of the double envelopment.¹⁹ There was no mention of the maneuver of encirclement. Additionally, the manual failed to provide guidance in two areas. It explained the conditions needed to conduct a double envelopment, but did not articulate the purpose behind conducting this maneuver. There was also no mention of the coordination required to conduct a double envelopment. Guidance of this nature would have been especially critical during the planning for both Operation COBRA and the Argentan-Falaise Pocket because each arm of the envelopments was composed of an Allied army. The lack of clear and detailed doctrinal guidance clearly played a part in the failure of American commanders and their planners to clearly recommend and then decide on either a short or long envelopment of enemy forces following the success of Operation COBRA. Besides not having the doctrinal support to fully comprehend the depth of the maneuver opportunity; there was also a failure to properly plan and link American and Allied objectives to ensure unity of effort in destroying German forces. This was evident in the lack of coordination following Operation COBRA between the Americans and their British Allies in choosing whether to attempt a short or long encirclement to trap the Germans; once it became evident each Allied envelopment arm could link-up into an encirclement operation.

¹⁷ Ibid., 403.

¹⁸ War Department, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 15 June 1944), 111.

¹⁹ Ibid 111.

Each of these encirclement options had the potential to be decisively fatal to German forces. The short encirclement involved turning American forces north towards Argentan, linking up with British and Canadian forces advancing south to Falaise. The long encirclement instead had American forces continue further to the east, eventually turning left along the Seine River meeting the British along its lower reaches.²⁰ The failure that plagued American forces in attempting the short encirclement was the result of two issues. First, U.S. doctrine did not provide the guidance required to ensure commanders were aware of the nature and applicability of encirclement operations. Second, General Bradley, the 12th Army Group Commander, violated existing doctrine by not adhering to the principle of concentrating the greatest amount of combat power to achieve the offensive objective. He also failed to dedicate a reserve sufficient to exploit the American wing of the encirclement.²¹ His diversion of an oversized corps, consisting of an additional armored division, toward the ports in the vicinity of Brittany clearly indicated that he did not fully appreciate the mass of ground combat power needed to successfully complete the envelopment and possible encirclement of German forces.²² In fact, in explaining his reason to halt American forces from moving beyond Argentan, General Bradley stated his preference for “a solid shoulder at Argentan to a broken neck at Falaise.”²³ This belays the point that General Bradley came to the realization too late; that he lacked the combat power required to complete the short encirclement. This may have not been such a critical issue had there been better coordination between the American and British/Canadian forces.

When General Bradley halted his military forces south of the city of Argentan; he made the decision to execute the long encirclement option. Once this decision was made, he ordered the

²⁰ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 405.

²¹ War Department, *Field Manual 100-5*, 118.

²² Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 401-403.

²³ Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, (Washington D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 507.

majority of the American XV Corps to move east from Argentan towards the Seine River without consulting General Montgomery, the British Commander.²⁴ The lack of communication caused two significant problems. First, strained communications between General Bradley and his superior General Montgomery provided the German forces the time necessary to identify and react to the eventual encirclement attempt by Allied forces. Once an agreement was finally reached to complete a short encirclement, the delay caused the American and British/Canadian forces to be met by large elements of retreating German forces. Encountering retreating German forces in large numbers resulted in stiffer resistance for the already weakened encircling forces.²⁵ The Americans and their Allied counterparts had lost the critical element of surprise needed to encircle and trap the enemy before he was able to react.

In this case, both the Allied, and especially the U.S. military commanders, failed to appreciate and understand the importance of linking tactical victories together to ensure overall success. The short-sightedness in planning was also exasperated and fueled by the friction inherent in rivalries and self-interests maintained by Allied commanders towards each other, even when fighting against a common enemy.

Throughout history, military operations conducted with multiple coalition partners, even when united against a common enemy, provide numerous examples of how both political and military differences at the strategic level can lead to friction that trickles down onto the battlefield. The European theatre during World War II was no different. The failure of American, and British/Canadian forces to close the Argentan-Falaise Pocket was a perfect example of the negative consequences this friction can have, bogging down military operations. What should have been a joint planning endeavor by American and Allied forces following the Normandy invasion appears to have morphed into compartmentalized planning internal to the respective

²⁴ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 408.

²⁵ Ibid., 408-409.

Allied forces. Once a secure foothold was established, the Allies almost isolated themselves to their respective area of operations. This was apparent when General Montgomery and General Bradley failed to agree upon whether to execute a short or long encirclement of German forces.²⁶

During the deliberate planning of Operation COBRA, there appeared to be little cooperation between the Allies. Carlo D'Este in his book, *Decision in Normandy*, asserts, "Bradley himself has made it clear that Montgomery played no part in the conception and development of COBRA."²⁷ He also contends that, "British and American thinking on the subject of offensive action was divergent that any similarity between them with regard to planning ended when it came to tactics."²⁸ These two statements are indicative of the difficulties facing a coalition force in synchronizing combined operations designed to achieve the best outcome.

The underlying contempt between General Bradley and General Montgomery appears to have also contributed in the failure to completely encircle and trap all of the German forces. Besides a lack of sufficient combat power, as addressed earlier, Martin Blumenson in his book, *Breakout and Pursuit*, alludes to another explanation as to why General Bradley halted the American Forces. "Perhaps more to the point was General Bradley's later explanation that a head-on meeting of Canadians and Americans would have been a dangerous and uncontrollable maneuver that might have caused a calamitous battle between friends."²⁹ This statement is not only indicative of the lack of coordination, and doctrinal guidance in controlling the maneuver of forces, but also an indicator of a lack of trust and faith between the Americans and their Allied partners. Had there been less friction between the coalition command elements, better cooperation in planning and synchronization could have been achieved. In fact, part of the blame rests on

²⁶ Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994), 444-445.

²⁷ D'Este, *Decision in Normandy*, 347.

²⁸ Ibid., 340.

²⁹ Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 506.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces. His belief that his army group commanders should settle matters between themselves left a vacuum when both decisions needed to be finalized between General Bradley and General Montgomery.³⁰ General Eisenhower's decision not to interject more often, led to a lack of unity of command and also effort.³¹ Asserting more control over his subordinates would have strengthened communication and therefore improved the synchronization and maneuver between the Allied armies on the ground. This would have increased the flexibility of these ground maneuver elements during execution. Ground commanders would have been better armed to exploit the unanticipated success of Operation COBRA, thereby completing the encirclement of German forces much quicker, and denying them the chance to safely withdraw any of their combat power.

Another issue revolved around the U.S. military's heavy reliance on aerial and artillery firepower, which produced an unbalanced approach to maneuver operations. This approach to conducting offensive operations was in direct contradiction to U.S. military doctrine. The doctrine stressed the importance of planning and synchronization of both ground and air operations to achieve success in the attack.³² Besides violating doctrine, this unbalanced approach to employing firepower in relation to maneuver also contributed to the failure of closing the Argentan-Falaise Pocket. In fact, there was a dispute among American commanders about executing the link-up between American and Canadian forces that centered on the employment of firepower. The dispute evolved because American commanders felt that bringing these forces closer together would have disrupted the aerial and artillery destruction of the retreating German

³⁰ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 406-407.

³¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3.0, Joint Operation*, A-2. The manual describes the principle of Unity of Command as, "The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective."

³² War Department, *Field Manual 100-5*, 1944, 124.

forces.³³ This quote provides evidence that American commanders favored the immediate attrition of German forces by firepower rather than the prospect of complete annihilation by means of an operational encirclement. The delay caused by trying to destroy the largest amount of German forces by fire inventively prevented ground maneuver forces from closing the ring around the Germans.

The reliance of firepower also created false expectations among American forces. Martin Blumenson states, “Many American troops had expected the bombardment to eliminate resistance in the target area. They thought that all the Germans would be killed or wounded...”³⁴ The overconfidence and reliance on firepower also influenced American military commanders on the ground. Some commanders, expecting complete devastation, mistakenly slowed their advance in the face of only sporadic small-arms and artillery fire.³⁵

In the end, the failure to completely encircle all of the German forces was significant. The German Army was able to withdraw nearly all of their army, corps, and division headquarters staffs. Saving this experienced core of leadership enabled the German Army to rebuild future combat formations with an experienced core of leadership.³⁶ The inability to prevent the withdrawal of the German forces captures the importance and relevance of encirclement operations. Army *Field Manual 3-90 Tactics* published in 2001, provides the overarching purpose behind these bold maneuver operations, “Ideally, the encirclement results in the surrender of the encircled force. This minimizes friendly force losses and resource expenditure.”³⁷ Following the

³³ Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 208.

³⁴ Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 45.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

³⁶ Krause and Phillips, *Historical Perspectives*, 409.

³⁷ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, D-1.

failure to exploit the Argentan-Falaise encirclement, American and their Allied partners would continue to experience the ill-effects of it right up until the end of the war in the European theatre.

The Battle of the Ia Drang Valley

“Decisive results in any war are obtained only by offensive action.”³⁸

The Battle of Ia Drang Valley consisted of several tactical engagements between the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and the B-3 Front, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) spanning from October 18, 1965 to November 24, 1965.³⁹ (See Appendix 2) The planning and execution of the battle was significant because it facilitated concepts that had lasting and somewhat negative effects on the U.S. military's involvement in Vietnam. First, there was the introduction and feasibility of conducting large scale air assault/airmobile operations. Next there was the belief in the employment of overwhelming firepower to facilitate the destruction of the enemy through the use of large scale search and destroy operations. Unfortunately, relying on these concepts overlooked the importance of the actual maneuver of ground forces to a position of advantage in relation to the enemy. The lack of doctrinal guidance, along with some American military commander's violations of existing doctrine, were critical factors in the inability to fully maximize the potential of the vertical envelopment enabled by the introduction of the helicopter in large numbers. The employment of firepower, instead of the maneuver of large troop concentrations to destroy the enemy resulted in the wide dispersion of U.S. forces on the ground. By preventing the massing of U.S. forces needed to achieve the freedom of maneuver and prevent the enemy's withdrawal. The technique of employing smaller combat units supported only by the use of firepower, in some cases resulted in commanders losing the freedom of maneuver.

³⁸ LTC Albert N. Garland, *Infantry in Vietnam* (Fort Benning: Infantry Magazine, 1967), 95.

³⁹ LTC Kenneth R. Pierce, “The Battle of Ia Drang Valley,” *Military Review*, Vol LXIX (January 1989), under “Settings,” <http://www.hadit.com/vaclaimslibrary/vietnam/THE%20BATTLE%20OF%20IA%20DRANG%20VALLEY.htm> (accessed January 15, 2009).

The Battle of Ia Drang marked the first and one of the few times during the Vietnam War where large scale conventional offensive maneuver was the required. In this case, the offensive consisted of a division's worth of combat power. The initial operation was planned and designed by General William Westmoreland as a spoiling attack against three NVA regiments in order to prevent a planned communist offensive into South Vietnam. In order to accomplish this operation, he directed the 1st Cavalry Division to pursue and destroy the enemy in the vicinity of the Central Highlands.⁴⁰ (See Appendix 2)

In order to find and engage the enemy, the technique widely employed was referred to as search and destroy operations. This technique was not taken from U.S. doctrine of the Vietnam era. In fact, the closest doctrinal definition able to describe this technique comes from a more contemporary Army manual published in 2001. This manual describes these operations as search and attack operations. These operations technically are a movement to contact.⁴¹ They are generally conducted over a large area in a de-centralized nature. In the case of search and destroy, once in contact, friendly units would have had two options; either execute a spoiling attack or be drawn into a trap by the enemy. If either of these situations occurred, firepower became critical in defeating the enemy.⁴² There were two issues with conducting search and destroy operations in Ia Drang. The first was that these operations were counter to the guidance in the Department of the Army's Field Manual, entitled *FM 100-5 Field Service Regulations Operations*, published in 1962. The manual states, "In offensive operations, the most decisive results are obtained by

⁴⁰ John Pimlott, *Vietnam The Decisive Battles*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 48.

⁴¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, 4-16 - 4-19.

⁴² Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984), 545.

strong, mobile exploiting forces.”⁴³ The Battle of Ia Drang was planned to engage and destroy three NVA regiments. Conducting operations with dispersed forces did not permit the concentration of ground forces required to obtain decisive results. This is also where the employment of firepower was purposely intended to replace the maneuver of forces in mass on the ground. The danger with employing this technique was the risk that smaller U.S. units might become overwhelmed by a much larger enemy force.

During this battle, Colonel Brown, the 1st Brigade commander, employed his entire unit piecemeal to facilitate multiple search and destroy operations. The decision to array his forces was purposely done to permit a large area of terrain to be swept. The intent was to increase the odds of making contact with the enemy. Once contact was made, friendly units would attempt to fix the enemy and call in heavy concentrations of firepower to complete the destruction.

Besides failing to concentrate his forces, he also violated existing doctrine by not dedicating a reserve element that possessed the combat power to quickly assist any of his subordinate units in contact.⁴⁴ The Army operations manual published in 1962, advised that a reserve element should be a portion of combat power that can react quickly and employed at the unit commander’s discretion to achieve a favorable decision. The manual also specifically discusses that during unclear situations, the reserve should always be more robust than when there is a clearer picture of the enemy.⁴⁵ This misjudgment in not dedicating a reserve almost proved fatal to 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry during the Battle of LZ X-Ray:

⁴³ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 19 February 1962), 63.

⁴⁴ Shelby L. Stanton, *Anatomy of a Division* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1987), 59.

⁴⁵ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 19 February 1962), 67.

“The Army and Air Force poured an incredible array of explosives on enemy in the area. Artillery from nearby Landing Zone Falcon fired more than 8,000 rounds- 4,000 coming on one day alone.”⁴⁶

These numbers alone provide the robust capability in firepower that could support American forces in contact. However, the example also provides how the overreliance and belief in firepower prevented the units within the brigade from being employed to provide mutual support to each other. This problem not only appeared at brigade level, but was also an issue at the division level.

The de-centralized nature of widespread search and destroy operations was also depicted by the locations of each of the individual brigades. The brigades of the 1st Cavalry division were located in a manner that made them semi-autonomous and relatively isolated from each other.⁴⁷ This dispersion made it almost impossible for the 1st CAV division to effectively and expediently mass its combat power if the enemy presented himself en masse. This was an interesting array of forces since the division was supposed to be conducting a pursuit of the enemy. The isolation of the Brigades meant the pursuit and isolation of the enemy was achieved by the heavy employment of firepower, instead of the maneuver of concentrated and massed ground combat units. Besides the fixation on firepower, the mobility of the helicopter also instilled a belief in a fallacy; this included the belief troops could be massed quickly enough to achieve the supremacy in maneuver.

The technological innovation of employing large numbers of helicopters provided the U.S. military with a revolutionary way of massing infantry combat power in expeditious manner that was unmatched by the enemy. “No single engagement demonstrated the basic validity of air

⁴⁶ Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles 1776-1965*, (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1986), 319.

⁴⁷ Heller and Stofft, *America's First*, 324.

assault as strikingly as the 1st Cavalry Division's Ia Drang Valley Campaign.”⁴⁸ This operational and tactical advantage actually enabled U.S. forces to maintain some element of surprise that had earlier been somewhat negated because of the difficult terrain encountered in Vietnam. The helicopter provided a new avenue for the U.S. military to conduct one of its primary forms of offensive maneuver labeled the envelopment.⁴⁹ The enemy was faced with the real possibility of becoming isolated and trapped from the air, by becoming vertically enveloped by U.S. forces. This new technique greatly increased the responsiveness and lethality of combat. American ground units also had a new asset in delivering close-in firepower by armed helicopters. The synthesis of this new mobility asset along with a capability to provide additional firepower, were instrumental in the emergence of the search and destroy operations mentioned earlier.

What was not clearly defined was how to successfully integrate vertical envelopments with ground maneuver to effectively isolate and trap the enemy. There did not seem to be an operational link incorporating the speed and surprise of vertical envelopments with conventional ground envelopments leading to actual encirclement operations.⁵⁰ The only mention of the importance of helicopters was as an asset to increase the mobility of the enveloping force.⁵¹ The chapter explains airmobile operations in FM 100-5 published in 1962 as:

⁴⁸ Garland, *Infantry in Vietnam*, 45.

⁴⁹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 19 February 1962), 64-65. “In an envelopment the main effort is directed toward the seizure of an objective in the enemy's rear that will cut his routes of escape and subject him to the risk of destruction in his present location. This is accomplished by striking at an assailable flank and by avoiding his main strength en route to the objective. A secondary attacks pins down the enemy to prevent his escape and reduce his capability of reacting against the main effort by forcing him to fight in two directions simultaneously. (64-65).

⁵⁰ Christopher Bellamy, *The Evolution of Modern Land Warfare*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 19-20.

⁵¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, 64.

“Airmobile operations can be employed to seize critical, lightly held or unoccupied objectives; exploit the effects of weapons; outflank enemy positions; conduct reconnaissance, security and screening missions; and conduct raids. During offensive operations, troops and their fire support may be shifted rapidly to gain a tactical advantage or to counter an enemy attack.”⁵²

It becomes evident from the above quote this technology was geared more towards facilitating the movement of troops and in employing firepower. There was little emphasis on enabling combat forces to gain a positional advantage over the enemy in order to successfully isolate and prevent his withdrawal. Field Manual 57-35, *Airmobile Operations*, published in 1963, only elaborates on the employment of combat forces in the conduct of a pursuit operation. It implies that airmobile forces can be used in the attack along with ground forces to destroy and disrupt the withdrawal of enemy forces.⁵³ The manual is based heavily on the technical aspects of conducting Airmobile Operations. What this manual and commander’s alike failed to focus on in Ia Drang was the terrain.

This is one area where the operations manual should have been closely followed. It provides great insight into the difficulties of maximizing the employment of firepower in jungle operations. The version of FM 100-5 published in 1962 discusses the issues of operating in the jungle:

“Jungle terrain and climate limit movement, observation, fields of fire, communications, and control. Because of these limitations, the difficulties of jungle operations increase in proportion to the size of the force involved. Cover and concealment are excellent in this type of terrain, thus increasing the possibility of achieving surprise. As a result, both the attacker and defender commit large portions of available forces to security missions.”⁵⁴

The appreciation of this type of terrain from the manual should have prompted U.S. commanders and their staffs to focus more on a balanced maneuver approach. The massing of combat forces

⁵² Ibid., 105.

⁵³ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 57-35, Airmobile Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 17 September 1963), 30.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 91.

on the ground would have provided U.S. commanders the ability to fix the enemy. Once in contact this fixing force could prevent the freedom of maneuver of the enemy while allowing U.S. forces the opportunity to conduct vertical envelopments. But the doctrine did not specifically address this in detail to ensure commanders were versed in the potential of the art of maneuver. This lack of guidance was also hampered by General Westmoreland's belief in the potential of firepower to accomplish the required attrition insurgent and NVA forces.⁵⁵

Unfortunately, reliance on firepower, combined with search and destroy operations, factored heavily in the inability of U.S. forces to effectively synchronize and maneuver en masse in order to trap the enemy and prevent a successful withdrawal. In defense of the U.S. commanders, doctrine failed to inform and guide them to the feasibility and potential on conducting an encirclement operation. The same FM 100-5 *Operations* manual did not even mention the maneuver of encirclement. Had this form of maneuver been discussed, it would have been analyzed as a possible option. It may have reminded U.S. commanders to importance of maneuver ground combat forces into a position of advantage over the enemy. But it was missing, and the role of overwhelming firepower became so common, it changed in some cases the function of the ground infantry. Instead of fighting and finishing the enemy, infantry's role was now accomplished by massed artillery strikes and airpower. The infantry was now relegated to just finding and fixing the enemy.⁵⁶ This inverse relation alone would have the potential to sacrifice the ability for U.S. military to develop the skills and cognitive experience necessary to stress the maneuver of forces, once the enemy learned to adapt in the face of significant U.S. firepower.

⁵⁵ Andrew F. Krepinevich, JR., *The Army and Vietnam*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 164.

⁵⁶ Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 2001), 36.

Following the series of engagements in the Ia Drang Valley, the enemy adapted to the firepower advantages possessed by U.S. forces. The NVA was now acquainted with its deadly effect, and would not soon again present such a lucrative target.⁵⁷ This adjustment by the enemy ensured they would not allow themselves to become isolated and trapped by firepower and air power alone. Adjusting their tactics to this would not be extremely difficult because as identified in FM 100-5 published in 1962, “An additional characteristic of jungle operations is the reduced capability to acquire targets.”⁵⁸ The only way to have prevented the enemy from breaking contact would have been to isolate the enemy and prevent his safe withdrawal by blocking any means of escape by ground forces. Since combat power was not massed effectively; instead employed only piecemeal, there never was an option to extend operations beyond finding and destroying the enemy. Whereas, it may have been more effective to not only find the enemy, but also have the forethought to maneuver into a position that facilitated the encirclement of the enemy. The maneuver of large U.S. ground combat forces would have been the best option to prevent the enemy’s withdrawal across the Cambodian border. However, this did not occur, which allowed the remaining elements of the decimated NVA regiments to safely withdrawn into the sanctuaries across the border in Cambodia.⁵⁹ In addition, the art of maneuver of ground forces was lost to the reliance on overwhelming firepower. Following Ia Drang, it would be the aggressive maneuver of ground forces that would be needed; but it did not fully materialize. Instead, the Battle of Ia Drang only reinforced the perception that firepower over maneuver was the answer to accomplishing the attrition strategy already set in motion.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Weigley, *the United States Army*, 564.

⁵⁸ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*, 91-92.

⁵⁹ Heller and Stofft, *America’s First Battles*, 321.

⁶⁰ Krepinevich, JR., *The Army and Vietnam*, 169.

Doctrinal Revolution 1986-2001

“The whole of military activity must relate directly or indirectly to the engagement.”⁶¹

Currently, *Joint Publication 1-2, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defines doctrine as “Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements there of guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.”⁶² The U. S. Army further elaborates on doctrine as being a guide to action, not a set of fixed rules. Doctrine’s role is to establish a common frame of reference including intellectual tools that Army leaders use to solve military problems. In essence the doctrine focuses on how to think- not what to think.⁶³ Following the publication of the Air-Land Battle concept, the U.S. Army’s doctrine along with the inception of joint U.S. military doctrine continued to evolve.

This evolution is important, because even though U.S. military doctrine and thought continued to produce changes and new insights into how to fight America’s wars, there was still an evident fixation on the reliance of firepower, and technology to stifle the maneuver of U.S. forces on the battlefield. There was also the continued underlining thread that firepower and technology could provide an adequate substitute for the need to mass forces on the battlefield. While not addressed in-depth, the first Gulf War with Desert Storm seemed to ratify the belief. In his book, Robert Citino describes the ground campaign of Desert Storm best, “It may have been

⁶¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 05 May 1986), 6.

⁶² U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 12 April 2001, as amended through 17 October 2008), 171.

⁶³ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.0, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 27 February 2008), D-1.

linear, firepower-drenched warfare, but it was still very, very good.”⁶⁴ Besides this description he also alludes to the effectiveness of the air campaign, calling it the most successful bombardment of all time, but still just a bombardment.⁶⁵ The above statements highlight how the incorporation of technology and firepower made this U.S. and coalition campaign so successful. But what it doesn’t address is the trend that doctrine was moving closer to the firm belief that technology and firepower could achieve the pinnacle effect of replacing the need for a large amount of ground combat units on the ground to achieve U.S. military success on the modern battlefield.

The revision and publication of the U.S. Army’s capstone manual FM 100-5, *Operations* in 1986 was historical, because for the first time the manual explicitly recognized the operational level of war.⁶⁶ This is important, because for the first time in American military doctrine the realization arises that there is a need to address how to translate tactical victories into strategic success. Other than acknowledging this level of war, the new FM 100-5, also solidified the importance of the offense. Maneuver warfare was also placed on a priority footing with the emphasis placed on the importance of encirclement and annihilation of the enemy.⁶⁷ The manual provided the basis for truly understanding and appreciating the potential of executing encircling operations. It recognized that during the pursuit of an enemy, the successful end-state needed to achieve victory was going to be accomplished by the maneuver of encirclement. The identification of a direct-pressure force and an encircling force represented a true appreciation for the importance of maneuver.⁶⁸ However, this manual also made an interesting point influencing future U.S. military operations.

⁶⁴ Robert M. Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm, The Evolution of Operational Warfare* (Lawrence: Unveristy Press of Kansas, 2004), 290.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 189.

⁶⁶ Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm*, 264.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 264.

⁶⁸ Headquarters Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, 119-120.

While discussing encirclement operations, the following statement is also made, “Pursuing forces that successfully encircle an enemy must prevent his attempts to breakout. If sufficient troops are not available, gaps may be blocked temporarily by fires or with barriers.”⁶⁹ Although not explicitly stated, this simple passage can easily be inferred to mean that firepower can effectively replace the numbers of combat forces on the ground. This is also reinforced by a significant statement made in the manual when addressing the elements of combat power. When describing the element of maneuver, it states explicitly that maneuver will rarely be possible without firepower.⁷⁰ Once again the importance of firepower is supplanted in the doctrinal foundation of the army.

The revision and publication of the U.S. Army capstone manual FM 100-5, *Operations* in 1993 explicitly has identified a tremendous shift in the idea of the future warfare. The manual describes the destructive nature of firepower in relation with the technological advancements in precision; of how essential it is in defeating the enemy ability and will to fight.⁷¹ This emphasis clearly places the employment of firepower above the element of maneuver to gain a positional advantage over the enemy; as the primary reason behind destroying the enemy’s ability and will to fight.

Another significant issue relates to dedicating a reserve during offensive operations. This revised publication states, “Unlike exploitation, however, commanders can rarely anticipate pursuit, so they do not normally hold forces in reserve solely to accomplish this mission.”⁷² This statement is critical because up until this point, U.S. military doctrine specifically identified encirclement operations resulting from the pursuit of the enemy. Without the dedication of a

⁶⁹ Ibid., 120.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 12.

⁷¹ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Operations*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 14 June 1993), 2-10.

⁷² Ibid., 7-9.

reserve, commanders would quickly become overextended during a pursuit operation, and not posse the combat power needed to successfully execute an encirclement operation. Along with discouraging the dedication of a reserve, no mention is made to indicate pursuit operations lead to eventual encirclements. This omission is in stark contrast with prior publications of this capstone manual. In fact, encirclement operations are only mentioned during the explanation of the offensive form of maneuver of envelopment.⁷³ When the encirclement operation is discussed there is a one sentence description of an encirclement operation as, “an extension of either a pursuit or envelopment.”⁷⁴ Unlike prior manuals little emphasis is given regarding the spirit and offensive decisiveness regarding encirclement operations. The manual goes in little depth explaining it, except to offer that the direct pressure force should attempt, “to inflict maximum casualties.”⁷⁵ This statement directly places emphasis on the employment of firepower to destroy the enemy force. The overall explanation of encirclement operations is generic and provides little clarity into the specifics of the how and why of the operations come about.

Unlike, the 1986 publication manual, the 1993 version of FM 100-5 removed the emphasis on the importance and effectiveness of conducting encirclement operations. It appears firepower and the technology advancements trump the importance of moving forces to gain a positional advantage over the enemy. This appeared to be the trend until the publication of yet another revision of the Army’s operations manual, now entitled, FM 3-0 *Operations* in June 2001, and Army FM 3-90 *Tactics* in July of the same year. The publication of these two manuals would revive to some extent the balance of maneuver, but were still handicapped by the heavy reliance on firepower and technology.

⁷³ Ibid., 7-11.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 7-11.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 7-11.

The publication of the new Army capstone FM 3-0 manual seems to have addressed some of the issues concerning maneuver from the 1993 version. Deleted was the emphasis that maneuver could not succeed without the overwhelming effects of firepower. The new version sought to create a balance between the two by prescribing that each of these elements of combat power complemented each other.⁷⁶ The encirclement operation was also re-introduced as a direct result of a pursuit operation:

“For most pursuits, commanders designate a direct pressure force and an encircling or enveloping force. The direct pressure force maintains pressure against the enemy to keep him from establishing a coherent defense. The encircling force conducts an envelopment operation or a turning movement to block the enemy’s escape and trap him between the two forces. The trapped enemy force is then destroyed. The encircling force must have greater mobility than the pursued enemy force. Joint air assets and long-range precision fires are also included, being described as essential for slowing enemy movement.”⁷⁷

The only drawback to this manual is the contention that commanders can still not expect operations to turn into pursuits, so it advises against employing a reserve.⁷⁸ This argument almost contradicts the faith the manual places on technology.

One of the most notably re-alignments of this new publication of FM 3-0, was the emphasis placed on technology. The manual contends that the advancements in technology are going to make the situational understanding so complete as to almost eliminate the fog and friction of the battlefield. The manual boasts that the nature of maneuver will be changed to the point that movement to contact will almost be a thing of the past.⁷⁹ Based on this claim, it would make sense that commanders could anticipate and plan for a pursuit. If this were so, then it would make sense to dedicate a reserve to ensure the pursuit could smoothly transition into an encirclement operation. In fact, the manual states, “Modernized Army forces may avoid

⁷⁶ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 4-6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-22.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7-22.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-28.

movements to contact altogether, developing the situation largely out of contact.”⁸⁰ This statement lends itself to the belief that the need to maneuver successfully can be gained without moving forces to a position of advantage. The manual also furthers this argument by placing heavy emphasis on the employment of precision fires and Information Operations in assisting the destruction of the enemy.⁸¹

So while this new manual made an improvement in addressing the importance of encirclement operations. It contradicts itself with the emphasis of how technology, along with precision fires is going to radically change the maneuver of ground combat units altogether. The underlying theme is this new technology is going to assist commanders in reducing the size of their force. It is implicit to a commander, if you know your enemy completely, then you do not need as many friendly forces to bring about his destruction or defeat.

Even with the claims of the greatness of technology to find, fix and destroy the enemy from long ranges; the publication of the Army’s FM 3-90, *Tactics* provides a significant step in the right direction to assist with maneuver of forces. The manual was unlike any other manual produced before. The sole purpose of this manual was to provide commanders with a detailed piece of literature that explains in detail the basic concepts and control measures associated with the art of tactics. But the one caveat is that it cannot to be read in isolation. Its use must conform to the capstone manual of the army, FM 3-0, *Operations*. In actuality, the manual provides the most comprehensive discussion of encirclement operations. Although, an important point to bring up is that there are six pages dedicated to conducting an encirclement operation, whereas there are thirteen pages dedicated to explain how to breakout of an encirclement.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7-28.

⁸¹ Ibid., 7-28.

⁸² Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.90, Tactics*, D-1- D-19.

Placing these ideas aside, the biggest shortcoming becomes the focus of forces and how the execution and planning of an encirclement operation is explained. The manual provides a basic framework to explain the types of encirclement operations and control measures needed to execute them. But as mentioned earlier, the manual does not discuss in-detail the need to employ a sufficient number ground units to ensure the success of encirclement operations. Nor does it recognize the importance of identifying the encirclement operation as a stand-alone form of offensive maneuver. In reality, according to the manual, encirclement operations would only occur following a pursuit or exploitation. During this point of the battle, it would be highly unlikely that the commander executing the encirclement had the required combat power to successfully execute an encirclement operation.

Similar to the Army's capstone manual FM 3-0, *Operations*, encirclement operation are discussed as an afterthought. This oversight ensures that units attempting to conduct encirclement operations will not possess the required mass in ground combat to execute. Instead, units will have to rely on firepower to try and fill the gaps to complete the encirclement. As history has already shown, this technique is never successful.

Operation Anaconda

“Do not underestimate your enemy. If he is a mouse, prepare to fight a lion.”⁸³

-Afghan proverb

Operation Anaconda was planned and executed in order to trap Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces regrouping in the Shahikot Valley. The operation was originally planned to last only three days but ended up turning into a seven days intense battle. Officially, Operation Anaconda lasted from March 2nd to 18 March 2002.⁸⁴ This operation was developed partially due to the failures of a preceding operation called the Battle of Tora Bora. The planning and execution of this battle was criticized by the overreliance on Afghan tribal forces. This was the result because of an insufficient amount of U.S. combat forces on the ground. The end result was the escape of hundreds of Al-Qaeda and other Afghan fighters.⁸⁵ When the U.S. military identified the massing of AL-Qaeda and Taliban forces near the town of Shah-e-Kot; Operation Anaconda was developed. Included in the plan to kill or capture this cluster of enemy forces, it was thought this specific area with its vast cave complexes could provide valuable intelligence that might impact global operations against terrorist forces.⁸⁶

⁸³ Jane Corbin, *AL-QAEDA: In Search of the Terror Network that Threatens the World*, (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), 281.

⁸⁴ National Defense University, Washington D.C., Center for Technology and National Security Policy, Richard Kugler. 2007. *Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan: A Case Study in National Security Transformation*. 1.

⁸⁵ Barton Gellman and Thomas E. Ricks, “U.S. Concludes Bin Laden Escaped at Tora Bora Fight.” *Washington Post*, (April 2002), under “Settings,” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62618-2002Apr16.html> (accessed 15 October 2008). 1-4.

⁸⁶ Rebecca Grant, “The Airpower of Anaconda” *AirForce Magazine*, (September 2002), under “Settings” <http://74.125.95.104/search?q=cache:Hx1eFwW8yVEJ:www.afa.org/magazine/sept2002.html> (accessed 24 October 2008), 1-2.

Although, the U.S. military had learned many valuable lessons from the Battle of Tora Bora, some of these lessons were not fully integrated or embraced during the planning Operation Anaconda. The analysis and evaluation of these issues will provide the context to argue even though the Operation Anaconda was hailed as a success; there will still be significant shortcomings because of a failure to properly employ U.S. and coalition forces, an overreliance on technology, and inability to properly conduct command and control. All of these issues combined, adversely affected both joint operations and U.S. Army commanders' ability to successfully plan and execute an encirclement operation aimed at preventing the withdrawal of enemy forces.

The plan for Operation Anaconda was developed to continue the pursuit of enemy forces. So in accordance with doctrine, the natural tendency would be to conduct an encirclement operation. The effect was to destroy or capture a retreating enemy force before they could withdraw to the sanctuary of Pakistan. The scheme of maneuver would focus on the isolation of Shahikot Valley. (See Appendix 3) The operation was to have in essence three concentric rings established to prevent withdrawal of enemy forces.⁸⁷ The inner portion of the planned encirclement operation forces would consist of two elements. The direct-pressure force was labeled Task Force (TF) Hammer. This force would be composed of Afghan indigenous forces lead American Special operations forces along with Afghan General Zia Lodin. The encircling force would be labeled Task Rakkasan, a brigade minus composed of elements of the 101st Air Assault Division, and the 10th Mountain Division. The outer encirclement ring would be labeled Task Force (TF) Anvil. These would also be made up of Afghan forces that would occupy blocking positions along likely enemy withdrawal avenues. Also on the outer ring would be Task Force K-Bar and Task Force 64. These elements would consist of coalition special operations that

⁸⁷ CMH Publication 70-83-1, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2003).

would provide surveillance and calls for fire on the objective area.⁸⁸ (See Appendix 3) What was deficient from the very beginning of this plan was employing the Afghan forces as the decisive operation.

The logic and rationale behind designating the Afghan forces as the decisive operation was based on the need to limit the presence of U.S. ground combat forces. Even if the Battle of Tora Bora had proven otherwise, Afghan forces would still do the majority of the fighting. This prompted the U.S. special operations forces to train Afghan militia forces under the direction of Afghan General Zia. These forces would spearhead the attack while supported by preparatory airstrikes and significant CAS.⁸⁹ Employment of these forces as the direct pressure force violated the planning considerations of an encirclement operation. The forces selected for this important task should have had the proper training, and been in sufficient mass to overcome any type of obstacle. When the enemy resistance encountered was stiffer than expected, and air support was lacking, Afghan troops designated as the direct-pressure force were unable to achieve their critical mission. These troops unfortunately did not react like a U.S. infantry unit would. As Stephen Biddle discusses, “To take such positions requires orthodox combined arms, fire and maneuver tactics. Such tactics are difficult to execute, and require skills and leaderships many potential indigenous allies lack.”⁹⁰ An interview with Mr. Lester Grau also pointed out the enemy was set-up in an almost traditional Western style prepared defense, with artillery pieces in direct support, ready to engage the Afghan troops.⁹¹

⁸⁸ CMH Publication 70-83-1, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, 32-37.

⁸⁹ College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education, Maxwell AFB, AL, Colonel Ernest Howard, Major Edgar Fleri, Jeffrey Hukill, and Thomas R. Searle. 2003. Operation Anaconda Case Study, 19-20.

⁹⁰ U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, Stephen Biddle. 2202. Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy, 15.

⁹¹ Mr. Lester Grau discussed in an interview conducted on March 27, 2009 from 1730 hrs to 1840 hrs, this was almost a textbook defense constructed by the enemy. The Afghan forces

Once the Afghan troops failed and withdrew on their own; the preponderance of the fighting fell on the American forces, which had air assaulted into the inner blocking positions. Without the direct pressure force suppressing the enemy, to prevent repositioning, the enemy was now able to solely focus his combat power against the U.S. encircling portion of the operation. Once this happened, the U.S. military was severely hampered in their ability to retain freedom of maneuver. These forces were fully engaged against an enemy that was well fortified and in some cases outnumbered the U.S. forces. In the course of the battle, one of the blocking positions had to be temporarily abandoned because of casualties and a lack of combat power to replace it. Following this, TF Rakkasan had to employ its tactical reserve of two companies to continue the fight and assume the main effort. Without the necessary mass in combat power to act as both the hammer and anvil, gaps were left open that could have enabled enemy forces to withdraw.⁹² In discussing Operational Art, Joint Publication 3-0 defines balance as:

“The maintenance of the force, its capabilities, and its operations in such a manner as to contribute to freedom of action and responsiveness. Balance refers to the appropriate mix of forces and capabilities within the joint forces as well as the nature and timing of operations.”⁹³

The reliance on technology was also another factor in the inability to properly identify the enemy composition and disposition. One of the biggest issues surrounding Operation Anaconda is the intelligence failure to detect the number of enemy forces, and also their will to stay and fight toe to toe against American and coalition forces. In an interview a few months, following the death of seven American special operation’s soldiers during Operation Anaconda, Army General

acting as the direct pressure attacked into a prepared defense, supported by a few dug in artillery pieces. Similar to other sources, he confirms that they were untrained and unprepared for this kind of intense fighting. Confirmation of this interview can be found in Appendix four.

⁹² Kugler, Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, A Case Study, 16-17.

⁹³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3.0, Joint Operations, IV-17.

Tommy Franks was quoted as saying, “The fog and friction of war ruled the day.”⁹⁴ What is unique about this statement is that according to FM 3-0, *Operations*, published in June 2001:

“Advanced surveillance and reconnaissance assets refine the picture of the enemy, while precision fires and IO destroy enemy cohesion. Reconnaissance and security elements maintain contact only as required to collect information that unmanned sensors cannot.”⁹⁵

From this passage it appears technology should have eliminated the fog and friction of war.

Unfortunately, even with the robust ISR platforms, the planners for Operation Anaconda did not have an accurate estimate of the number of enemy forces. Intelligence estimates also failed to identify the presence of several well stocked and fortified enemy positions. This would end up becoming a serious flaw because the majority of these positions were not in the valley itself, but were located along the eastern ridge where U.S. forces would be setting up their blocking positions.⁹⁶ The enemy had studied our use ISR platforms and had used the terrain to gain a marked advantage when it came time to defend against U.S. and coalition forces that attacked into the rugged atmosphere of the Shahikot Valley.⁹⁷

Another critical error was the intelligence prediction that the enemy forces would not stay and fight, instead they would withdraw.⁹⁸ Instead, the enemy the U.S. and coalition forces encountered was not withdrawing, instead they were exploiting their defensive positions, and were well supplied to stand and fight. This was a marked difference from previous encounters.

⁹⁴ Linda D. Kozaryn, “Fog, Friction Rule Takur Ghar Battle,” *American Forces Press Service*, (May 2002), under “Settings,” <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=44019.html> (accessed October 24 2008).

⁹⁵ Headquarters Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*, 7-28.

⁹⁶ Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, *The Lessons of Afghanistan: Warfighting, Intelligence, Force Transformation, Counterproliferation, and Arms Control*, (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 12 August 2002), 40.

⁹⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Christopher F. Bentley, “Afghanistan Joint and Coalition Fire Support in Operation Anaconda,” *Field Artillery Magazine*, (September-October 2002), under “Settings,” http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_mOIAU/is_4_7ai_92457734.html (accessed January 15 2009), 11.

⁹⁸ Howard, Fleri, Hukill, and Searle, Operation Anaconda Case, 21.

The enemy during Operation Anaconda was better prepared, trained, and equipped to fight. The enemy also possessed more dedication and motivation even in the face of impending defeat.⁹⁹ The aspect of the enemy completely surprised American planners. In fact, during the battle ISR assets picked up movement of a number of enemy forces moving into the valley to reinforce their positions, instead of the anticipated withdrawal of enemy forces.¹⁰⁰ These unanticipated acts by the enemy by the enemy were only mitigated by the resolve and success of the U.S. and coalition forces already engaged. The lack of apparent ground combat power and lack of operational reserve left the U.S. and coalition forces with little options to execute any type of branch plan that could effectively trap and contain the enemy completely. Even with the arrival of additional coalition forces the inability to mass enough competent ground forces at the start of the operation proved to be a critical shortcoming, especially when technology had failed to accurately depict the strength and tenacity of enemy forces.

The command and control issues addressed here specifically deal with the planning and execution of encirclement operations. Vital to the success of an encirclement operation is the unity of command of all the elements involved. Specifically these elements are the direct pressure element, and the encircling elements. During the planning and execution of Operation Anaconda the main effort of the encirclement was never under the direct control of Major General Frank Hagenbeck, the commander of Combined Joint Task Force Mountain. TF DAGGER, the direct pressure element that was the decisive operation for Operation Anaconda was only TACON to CJTF Mountain.¹⁰¹ This type of control caused issues in both planning and execution. For the planning, these forces were mainly left out because of the fear of operational security of the operation. During the execution, these forces withdrew on their own accord. Without possessing

⁹⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.

¹⁰¹ Howard, Fleri, Hukill, and Searle, *Operation Anaconda Case*, 24.

organic control, there was little that the commander of CJTF Mountain could do once they withdrew.¹⁰²

Besides not having the Afghan forces under adequate command and control, there was also a lack of integration between the air component and ground component. This may not even have become an issue, but the failure of the Afghan forces to achieve their mission left the U.S. led operation short on ground combat forces needed to successfully execute the encirclement operation. The only available option left to compensate for this lack of combat power was to significantly increase the employment of airpower. Unfortunately, the need for such a marked increase in airpower was not factored in the initial plan, or any foreseeable branch plan based on: “This was the case largely because the operation was viewed by Task Force Mountain and CFLCC as being mainly a ground assault in which air forces would play only a minor supporting role.”¹⁰³ Thus there was little to no coordination in prior planning.¹⁰⁴ This lack of command and control also caused ripples because without official control over the Air Force elements, “General Hagenbeck and his ground commanders could only request air strikes, not order them.”¹⁰⁵

Operation Anaconda was declared a victory in the end. As in the past, numerous enemy forces killed in action meant success. Unfortunately, Operation Anaconda has again illustrated that although firepower is critical, against a well trained and supplied enemy, encircling forces are still going to need sufficient numbers of trained combat troops to successfully maneuver to gain a position of advantage over the enemy to prevent his safe withdrawal.¹⁰⁶ The battle was also significant because it demonstrated even with a revolution in doctrine; U.S. military forces were

¹⁰² Kugler, Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, A Case Study, 9.

¹⁰³ Kugler, Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan, A Case Study, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁶ Biddle, Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare, 21.

still finding it difficult to find the right balance between firepower and maneuver. The employment of precision strikes by air power could not change that the U.S. military relied too heavily on technology, and Afghan forces to provide a substitute for U.S. military ground combat forces in an effort to successfully plan and execute an encirclement operation.

In fact, placing Afghan militia forces as the decisive element in an encirclement operation illustrated the U.S. commanders did not fully appreciate the complexity of executing an encirclement operation. During the Battle of Tor Bora Afghan militia had been notorious for conducting negotiations that enabled enemy forces to escape.¹⁰⁷ Understanding how the Afghan militia fought should have provided U.S. military commander's with the awareness these troops should only be employed for secondary missions. Even if the enemy acted like they had during Tora Bora, it is certain there would have not been enough reliable troops on the ground to completely isolate and successfully encircle the enemy during Operation Anaconda.

¹⁰⁷ Rebecca Grant, "The Airpower of Anaconda," 2.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As stated in the introduction, encirclement operations have historically been the decisive form of maneuver when executed correctly. Based on the current nature of fighting, they will continue to provide the dynamic maneuver needed to decisively defeat an enemy. Naturally, one could assume that this form of offensive maneuver would be favored by the U.S. military because of its potential to lead to quick and decisive operations. In fact, for over sixty years the U.S. military has possessed the forces, mobility, technology, and firepower needed to successfully establish the conditions required to shape the battlefield favoring the encirclement of the enemy. But even with these advantages the U.S. military failed to exploit these in order to translate offensive operations into decisive encirclement operations. In order to understand why the U.S. failed; the question must be asked as to why the U.S. military couldn't achieve the decisive maneuver of encirclement.

The first reason identified was the U.S. military's reliance on firepower to provide a substitute for the maneuver of ground forces. In all three of these battles the following is true, the employment of firepower was explicitly used to supplement and act as a substitute for the employment of the necessary amount of ground combat forces. Whether by design or by necessity, U.S. commanders deliberately tried to trap and isolate enemy forces by the employment of massed firepower. Although, this technique was credited in all cases of destroying a larger percentage of the enemy, it also adversely affected the U.S. forces. In each instance, the employment of overwhelming firepower set a precedence discounting the maneuver of ground forces to gain a positional advantage over the enemy. Instead, U.S. ground forces would gain contact with the enemy in order to enable the enemy to be finished by massed firepower instead of maneuver. While this technique may have worked initially, enemy force in each case quickly got smart and withdrew before becoming destroyed completely. Once the enemy withdrew, U.S. forces did not effectively pursue and trap the enemy because they either did not appreciate the

opportunity presented, of lacked sufficient ground combat power to completely encircle the enemy.

Another issue has been the continued reliance on technology to replace or heavily supplement the employment of large numbers of ground troops to maneuver against the enemy. This increased reliance has further tipped the balance between firepower and maneuver to an uneven footing. The chronological order of these case studies illustrates that advancements in technology have an inverse relationship with the number of ground troops committed to battle. Analysis of each of the case studies has provided evidence that each time firepower and technology have been used to act as a substitute for ground forces to encircle an enemy, the enemy has always managed to overcome this, and withdraw portions of his force. In addition, to this error, acknowledgments have been made that these enemy forces would not have escaped had a successfully encirclement been executed. The only outlier here is the Battle of Ia Drang, where an actually encirclement was not truly attempted. But based off the planning and execution, there was an implicit attempt to execute this type of maneuver but with the majority of the encirclement coming from the employment of firepower.

The final issue identified was the lack of appreciation in the command and control needed to execute an encirclement operation. Conducting an encirclement operation is one of the most complex military operations conducted. There is a direct pressure force and normally one or two encircling arms. Each of these elements needs to be planned and synchronized close to perfection to prevent the possibility of the enemy escaping, or even worse fratricide between encircling arms. Another factor that makes these operations extremely complex, are if multiple units or multiple coalition forces are involved in the encirclement operation. Two of the cases studies vividly illustrate the difficulties that arise when coalition forces are not under the command of one commander.

Without unity of command, each of the moving parts of an encirclement operation can and will quickly become desynchronized and lose the speed and surprise needed to be successful.

Additionally, commanders need to completely understand the forces under their command. This becomes especially important when assigning them missions within their capabilities. During Operation Anaconda, Afghan forces were given the decisive mission that was essential to the overall mission success. When they failed it almost resulted in the loss of a battle. U.S. commanders not only failed to realize the importance of the direct pressure force, but also relied on technology and firepower to make-up for a lack of ground combat power. Even with the experience of the reliability of these forces, they were still chosen to execute a vital mission. This just reinforces the argument that the U.S. military does not appreciate the importance of providing the necessary ground combat units needed to effectively provide the operational reach needed to execute successfully the decisive maneuver of encirclement.

While considering the U.S. military's present situation concerning the operational environment, it can almost be guaranteed that the opportunity to execute an encirclement operation will arise again. This time there needs to be no doubt as to the planning and coordination needed to be successful. Commanders and their staffs need to be aware and ready to acknowledge that encirclement operations can happen independently from a pursuit or exploitation. This claim counters the current doctrine, and needs to be made explicit. U.S. military doctrine needs to be adjusted to reflect two changes.

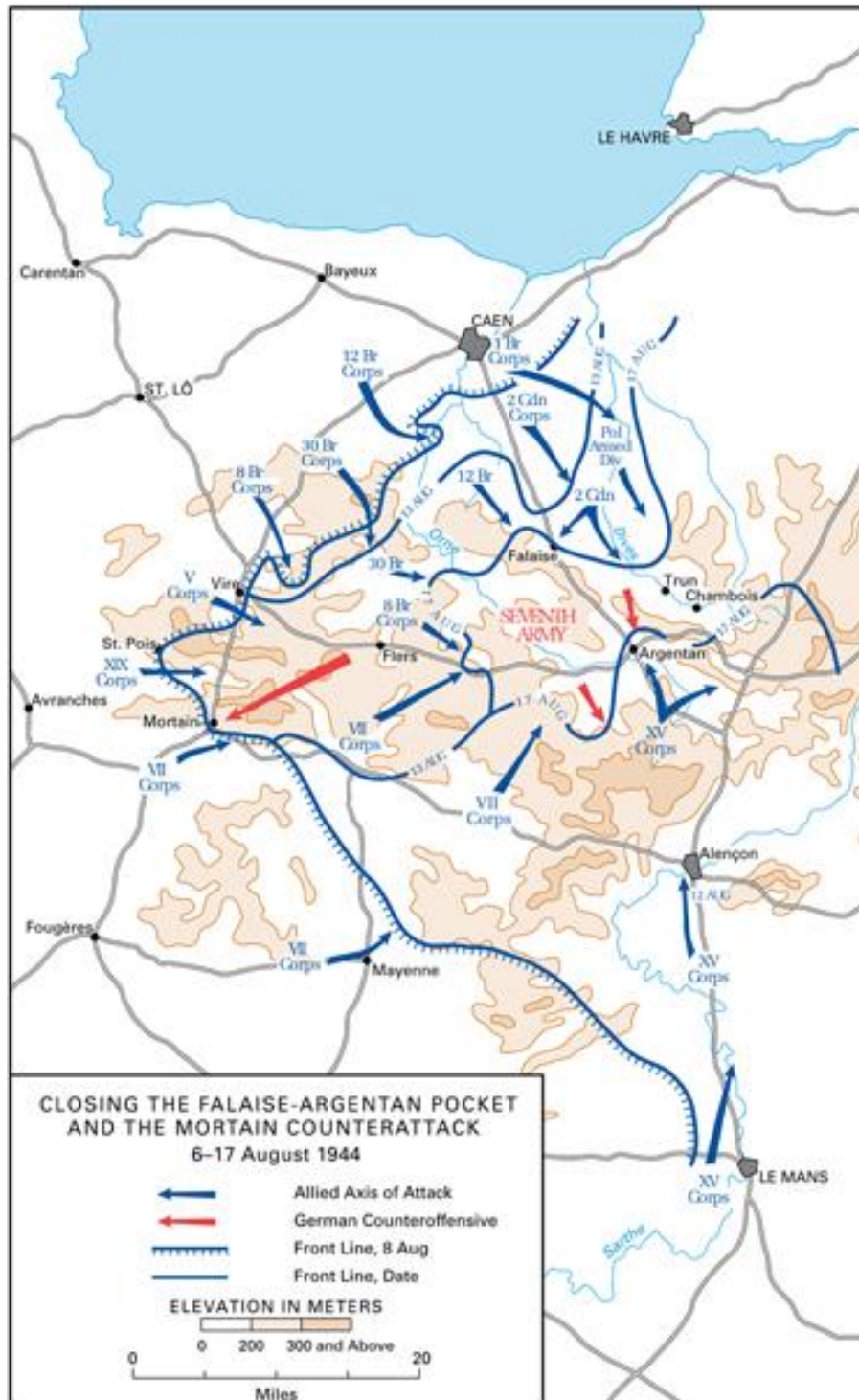
The first change addresses the fact that encirclement operations need to be designated as an independent form of offensive maneuver. By making this change, encirclement operations will be viewed as a valid and independent maneuver operation. Deliberate planning could be conducted to ensure the forces and logistics were sufficient to accomplish the operation. Currently, doctrine places the encirclement operation as a subsequent follow-on operation. By doing this, encirclement operations are viewed as possible missions and are not given the priority of planning and resource allocation necessary to be successfully executed. Included with this revision, would be to stress the decisiveness and psychological effects this type of operation can have on the enemy. History has shown that an enemy can deal with a tremendous amount of

firepower, but has great difficulty when he knows that he is isolated and surrounded with no way to withdraw to safety.

Once encirclement operations are given this priority, there next needs to be emphasis placed on the how encirclement operations are sealed and reduced. The area that needs to be clarified is how fires are employed. When executing the encirclement firepower can be employed to suppress the enemy and prevent his repositioning. What firepower should be used for is actually trying to replace combat units when executing the actual encirclement. If this is not made specifically clear, commanders will still continue to employ firepower as a substitute for the movement and maneuver of forces on the ground. Like each of the case studies have shown, this technique rarely ever succeeds. In addition, the type of forces employed to execute the decisive portion of the encirclement need to be made explicit. Just like any other operation, there should be no doubt as to where the best troops need to be placed to ensure success of the mission. It also goes without saying; units that can plan and execute a maneuver as complex as the encirclement operation will be hardly challenged to execute other forms of maneuver during full spectrum operations.

Finally, in determining the future validity of maneuvering against an insurgent type force, it must always be remembered that regardless of the U.S. military's advantages in weapons and resources, insurgents will always find low tech means to counter them. In the end, it will always take large numbers of well-trained and coordinated forces to maneuver into a position of advantage to close with and either kills or captures the enemy.

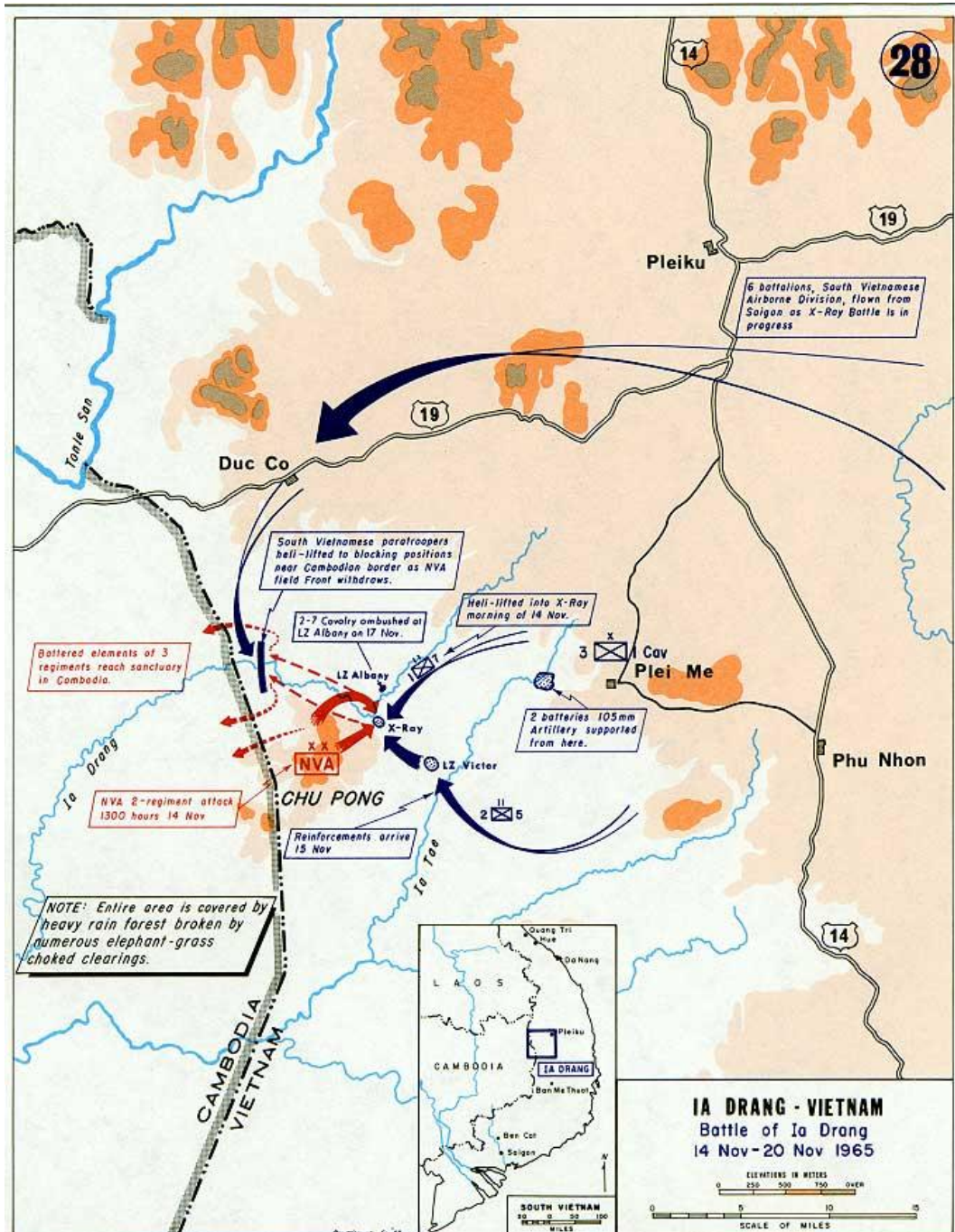
APPENDIX 1



MAP 15

Source: <http://www.history.army.mil/books/OpArt/us3.htm>

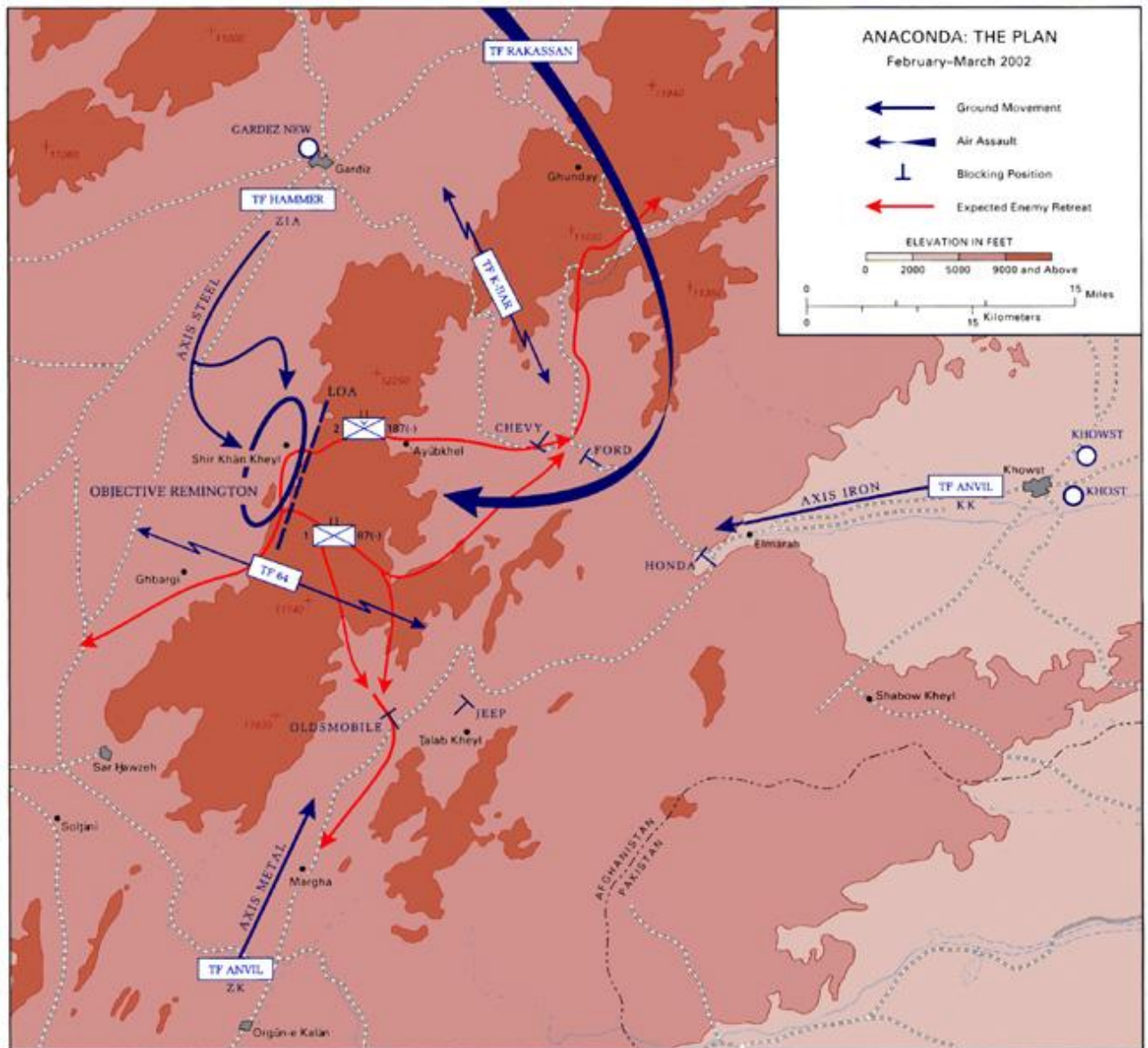
APPENDIX 2



Source:

https://courses.leavenworth.army.mil/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=/bin/commo/n/course.pl?course_id=2011_1

APPENDIX 3



Source:

<http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Afghanistan/Operation%20Enduring%20Freedom.htm#p>

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APPENDIX 4

----- Original Message -----

From "Grau, Lester W CIV USA TRADOC" <les.grau@us.army.mil>
Date Wed, 01 Apr 2009 16:39:17 -0500
To "Thomas, Scott MAJ MIL USA TRADOC" <scott.thomas6@us.army.mil>
Subject RE: RE: Operation Anaconda (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Hi Scott: Go with it. Les

-----Original Message-----

From: Thomas, Scott MAJ MIL USA TRADOC
[<mailto:scott.thomas6@us.army.mil>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 4:21 PM
To: Grau, Lester W CIV USA TRADOC
Subject: Re: RE: Operation Anaconda (UNCLASSIFIED)

Sir,

In reference to our conversation on Friday 27 March 2009 about Operation Anaconda. I used some information from our conversation. The following is verbatim from my monograph, "A discussion with Mr. Lester Grau also pointed out the enemy was set-up in an almost traditional Western style prepared defense, with artillery pieces in direct support, ready to engage the Afghan troops."

I just wanted to verify that this statement meets your approval for use in my monograph. The date and time of the interview was referenced in a footnote and Bibliography.

Thanks, I had a great conversation with you. I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me.

Take Care,
MAJ Scott Thomas

V/R,
MAJ Scott Thomas
SAMS

----- Original Message -----

From: "Grau, Lester W CIV USA TRADOC" <les.grau@us.army.mil>
Date: Friday, March 27, 2009 15:12
Subject: RE: Operation Anaconda (UNCLASSIFIED)

To: "Thomas, Scott MAJ MIL USA TRADOC" <scott.thomas6@us.army.mil>

> Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

> Caveats: NONE

>

> Hi Scott: I am here this afternoon and next week. My phone number is

> 684-5954. Les

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Thomas, Scott MAJ MIL USA TRADOC

> [<mailto:scott.thomas6@us.army.mil>]

> Sent: Friday, March 27, 2009 10:27 AM

> To: Grau, Lester W CIV USA TRADOC

> Subject: Operation Anaconda

>

> Sir,

> Good morning. I am writing in reference to my monograph. My topic

> deals with encirclement operations.

> Dr. Kipp said that I should come and talk to you because you are doing

> work pertaining to Operation Anaconda. One of the case studies I am

> using is Operation Anaconda. Is there a time I could meet with you to

> discuss this prior to next Wednesday? Thanks, Sir

>

> Take Care,

> MAJ Scott Thomas

>

> V/R,

> MAJ Scott Thomas

> SAMS

> Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

> Caveats: NONE

>

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

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- Interview with LTC(R) Lester W. Grau, Foreign Military Studies Office, 27 March 2009, 1730hrs to 1830 hrs at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.